

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00278 010810Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DEAE-00 JUSE-00 SNM-02

TRSE-00 OES-07 OMB-01 /114 W

-----026685 010842Z /15

R 010530Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 182

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

USMISSION USUN

COMIDEASTFOR

UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 0278

EO: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, EPAP, SNAR, ETRD DJ ET

SUBJ: DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT CONFRONTS KHAT PROBLEM

REF: DJIBOUTI 274

1. OF ALL THE MANY EFFECTS OF THE HOSTILITIES IN THE DIRE DAWA REGION OF ETHIOPIA, THE ONE WHICH APPEARED TO CONCERN THE MASS OF DJIBOUTI'S PUBLIC MORE THAN ANY OTHER WAS THE SUSPENSION OF KHAT DELIVERIES. A MILD NARCOTIC, THE LEAFY PLANT COMMONLY REFERRED TO BY DJIBOUTIENS AS "SALADE", HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN CHEWED MOSTLY BY MALES AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY AND WAS RECOGNIZED AS A SOCIAL BENEFIT BY THOSE WHO REGARDED IT AS A PLEASANT WAY OF STIMULATING DISCUSSION AMONG FRIENDS DURING THE FIERCELY HOT DJIBOUTI AFTERNOONS

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 DJIBOU 00278 010810Z

AND EVENINGS. MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS HAVE VARIOUSLY ATTACKED THE CONSUMPTION OF KHAT BECAUSE OF ITS DELETERIOUS EFFECTS ON THE STOMACK AND SPLEEN AND THE FACT THAT ITS WIDESPREAD UTILISATION ABSORBED VERY HIGH PERCENTAGES OF WORKER'S INCOMES AND CAUSED PRODUCTIVITY IN THE PORT AND GENERAL COMMERCE OF DJIBOUTI TO FALL VIRTUALLY TO ZERO IN THE AFTERNOONS. UNTIL THE HALT IN DELIVERIES

TWO WEEKS AGO, THREE TONS OF KHAT WERE TRANSPORTED DAILY FROM DIRE DAWA TO DJIBOUTI VIA AN ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES DC-3.

2. REPORTEDLY IN THE THE LAST FEW DAYS, THE EPMG APPROCHED LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN URGENT SEARCH FOR JET FUEL. APPARENTLY, SOME KIND OF A QUID PRO QUO WAS PROPOSED, KHAT FOR JET FUEL. HOWEVER, FOR REASONS WHICH ARE NOT CLEAR, THE FIRST DELIVERY OF KHAT WAS INADEQUATE FOR LOCAL NEEDS AND OF POOR QUALITY CAUSING LOCAL DISTURBANCES AS THE LOCAL SALAD DEALERS ATTEMPTED TO DISTRIBUTE ONE TON OF KHAT AMONG CUSTOMERS WHO NEEDED THREE TO SATISFY THEIR NEEDS. BECAUSE OF THIS, THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUIRED AT LEAST ONE SUBSEQUENT ETHIOPIAN FLIGHT TO RETURN UNLOADED BECAUSE IT CONTAINED ONLY ONE TON OF KHAT SUSPENDED FURTHER DELIVERIES.

3. AT THE MOST RECENT CABINET MEETING , JULY 28, THE MATTER WAS EXAMINED AND IT WAS DECIDED THAT UNTIL ALL KHAT NEEDS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION COULD BE FILLED, THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER DISTRIBUTION OF KHAT PERMITTED IN THE COUNTRY.

4. THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE SEIZED THE OCCASION TO BEGIN A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE USE OF KHAT. L.P.A.I. LOCAL LEADERS ARE EVIDENTLY SUPPORTING THE CAMPAIGN AND A LONG EDITORIAL IN THE JULY 30, REVEIL DE DJIBOUTI, CALLS FOR A GENERAL DISINTOXICATION OF THE POPULATION IN THE INTERESTS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPROVED PERSONAL WEALTH AND ECONOMY.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 DJIBOU 00278 010810Z

5. EXPERIENCED OBSERVERS OF THE LOCAL SCENE APPLAUD THESE EFFORTS BUT AGREE THAT IT A DARING AND COURAGEOUS MOVE WHICH WILL CALL FOR MAXIMUM EFFORTS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO INSURE SUCCESS. CLARKE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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